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**Volume 3**

## Key Points:

- Thank you to our pilot program volunteers! Pilot classrooms will start in January 2016.
- State and Federal Reporting requirements and criteria are identical to the Special Diploma
- Students working toward the Applied Studies Diploma are still required to participate in [state assessments](#) (SOL, VSEP, VMAST, or VAAP)

Virginia Department of  
Education  
101 N. 14th Street  
James Monroe Building  
Richmond, VA 23219

## Applied Studies Diploma Bulletin

The purpose of the Applied Studies framework is to provide IEP teams with guidance when developing IEPs as well as provide students with the skills they will need when they exit high school. The curriculum framework is designed to address these specific skills while allowing flexibility to teachers to allow them to teach to student interests and skills. The Applied Studies Diploma is not intended to address every skill a student may need, nor is it a replacement for state assessments such as end of course SOLs or the Virginia Alternative Assessment program.

## Accountability and Reporting

The Department of Education is exploring ways to measure teacher accountability in regards to providing effective and efficient instruction to students with disabilities. The Applied Studies Curriculum map will provide a foundation on which teachers and IEP teams can identify practices that have been shown to be effective in teaching specific skills as well as elements of programs that have improved post-secondary outcomes. We are looking for interested teachers and administrators to help us develop an evaluation system that focuses on the use of research based practices and the incorporation of research-based programmatic elements.

## Newsletter Spotlight Evidence Based Practices

An evidence-based practice (EBP) is a teaching method used to teach a specific skill that has been shown to be effective based on high-quality research (Cook, Tankersly, & Landrum, 2009). The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center has identified practices and aligned them with skills that may be taught in a secondary program. Evidence based and research based practices provide teachers with information about which teaching method has been most effective at helping students with disabilities learn skills. The use of evidence based practices will be critical in designing and implementing instruction for students working toward the Applied Studies Diploma. For more information, visit the [National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center](#).

If you have questions or comments please contact Daniel Irwin at [daniel.irwin@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:daniel.irwin@doe.virginia.gov) or by phone at 804-371-7421.